

ENERGY TIDBITS – November 2008

Federal Energy Tax Credits have been extended as part of the financial rescue legislation that was recently passed by Congress. The new law contains a 1-year extension of the production tax credit for wind energy, a 2-year extension of the production tax credit for other renewables, an 8-year extension of the tax credits for investment in commercial and residential solar projects, including the removal of the \$2,000 cap on residential solar electric installations, the addition of small wind energy and geothermal heat pump projects as qualifying for tax credits, a 5-year extension of the tax deduction for energy-efficient commercial buildings, a 1-year extension of the tax credit for the construction of new energy-efficient homes, and tax credits for qualified energy-efficiency upgrades to existing homes are reinstated for 2009. <http://www.energytaxincentives.org/>

Mariah Power and Michigan-based MasTech will partner on a \$2.2 million project in Manistee County. The companies are working together to mass produce the Windspire®, a wind power system designed for homes and businesses. The project is expected to create 141 new jobs and \$1.8 million in new capital investment. A \$400,000 grant is being made available by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to support the project. The grant will be used to assist MasTech with financing equipment needed to produce the Windspire®. The Windspire® can produce around 2,000 kWh's per year with average wind speeds of 12 mph. The unit stands about 30 feet high (20-foot-tall rotor) and operates with 3 sets of airfoils that catch wind and rotate around a vertical axis. The unit sells for around \$5,000 plus installation. www.mariahpower.com

Governor Granholm announced on Oct. 27 a reorganization of state government that aligns all activities related to renewable energy and energy efficiency in one department. By executive order, all activities related to the energy sector will be consolidated into the Department of Labor and Economic Growth which will be renamed the Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth (DELEG). Granholm announced the appointment of her special advisor on renewable energy, Stanley "Skip" Pruss, to serve as the CEO and director of DELEG. Pruss will be responsible for promoting the use of renewable energy, the development of advanced energy technologies, and the implementation of energy efficiency measures in the state. He replaces Keith Cooley who has accepted a position as CEO of NextEnergy in Detroit.

Residential Energy Code injunction was lifted by Ingham County Circuit Court Judge Dragonchuck. The judge ruled in the State's favor on the Michigan Assoc. of Home Builders (MAHB) lawsuit that prevented energy efficiency improvements to the Michigan Uniform Energy Code in Feb. 2005. The new code can be found at www.michigan.gov/bcc.

Water Street Inn, Boyne City, has earned Green Lodging Michigan (GLM) Steward certification. Holiday Vacation Rentals, which manages the facility, uses

energy efficient lighting and green cleaning products and have a linen and towel reuse program. Water Street Inn has also completed an energy audit on the property to help discover ways to improve energy efficiency and cut utility costs. "We're very excited to earn this certification and firmly believe that as a lodging facility we can make a positive environmental impact, especially in the local watershed," said Jessica Dotzlaf, director of guest services.
<http://www.boynewaterstreetinn.com/>

Michigan's Portion (40%) of the Great Lakes has the capacity to produce 321,936 MW from wind energy according to a study by the Land Policy Institute, MSU. "This result has the potential to elevate Michigan's wind energy profile nationally and internationally because the resource available is significant," said Dr Soji Adelaja, director of the Land Policy Institute.
http://www.landpolicy.msu.edu/modules.php?name=News&op=viewlive&sp_id=71

Conference on Michigan's Future: Energy, Economy, & Environment will be held on November 14-16 at Crystal Mountain Resort. Speakers include Richard Heinberg, author of "The Party's Over" and "Peak Everything"; Ellen Hodgson Brown, author of "Web of Debt"; Albert Bates, author of "The Post-Petroleum Survival Guide and Cookbook"; Stephanie Mills, author of "Epicurean Simplicity"; and Bill Wilson of Midwest Permaculture. Michigan legislator Kathleen Law will explain feed-in-tariffs. Steve Smiley will unveil a 100% renewable electricity program for northwest Michigan. Tony Earley, Chairman of DTE; Paul Murray of Herman Miller; and Jerry Norica, President of Michcon will address nuclear energy, green industry, and natural gas.
<http://futuremichigan.org>

The Listening Inn, Crystal Falls, has earned Green Lodging Michigan (GLM) Leader certification. The Listening Inn offers a linen and towel reuse program and has a comprehensive recycling program. The Listening Inn also uses Energy Star lamps and other products to help conserve energy and they grow most of their fruits and vegetables on site. "We are proud to be a Leader in the Green Lodging program, it stands for what we are trying to accomplish here at our Inn," said Carol Kufahl, owner of The Listening Inn. "We have our 520 acres of land in a forest management program and use our forest resources as a fuel to heat our business." www.thelisteninginn.com

SWIFT Wind Turbine's first customer installation in Michigan is at the Frauenthal Center for the Performing Arts, owned and operated by the Community Foundation for Muskegon County. The 1.5 kW wind turbines are built by Cascade Engineering in Grand Rapids. The Swift turbine operation currently employs 15 people. The North American units are assembled here along with all of the rotor blades for the units sold worldwide. Cascade hopes to sell up to 2,000 Swift units in 2009. www.SwiftWindTurbine.com

Grand Rapids leads the nation in the number of LEED-certified buildings per capita. In 2005, Mayor George Heartwell pledged that more than 20% of the city's power would come from renewable sources by 2008. The city hit that target a year early, and Heartwell upped the target to 100% by 2020. The municipal government's energy use has been cut by more than 10%. The public-transit fleet features hybrid buses. And manufacturers are leading the green charge. Office-furniture heavyweights Herman Miller and Steelcase both have LEED-certified buildings in the area, as do industrial firms such as Cascade Engineering.

12th Annual Sustainable Business Conference of Michigan, Energizing Michigan's Green Future will be held on November 13, 7:30-4:15 at the Fetzner Center, WMU. The conference focuses on Michigan's business & energy future, & will bring together businesses, college students, & advocacy groups. <http://www.southwestmichigansustainablebusinessforum.org/>

DTE Energy Efficiency Forums will go thru November. Experts, suppliers, & installers will provide advice. <http://my.dteenergy.com/products/energySeminars/energyEfficiency.html>

ASTM International, the standards organization, has approved a standard for biodiesel blend vehicle fuels from 6 to 20% biodiesel. The work is recognition of two years of work at the National Biofuels Energy Laboratory, located in Detroit's NextEnergy Center. The 20% bio content of B20 is a significant increase from the 5% biodiesel B5 fuel currently on the market. www.nextenergy.org

Association of Energy Engineers West Michigan Chapter will have a meeting on Nov. 12, 11:30 am to 1:00 pm, at the Watermark Country Club, 5500 Cascade Road, Grand Rapids. On October 6, Governor Granholm signed into law Public Acts 286, 287, and 295. The presentation will provide an overview of the resulting changes in Michigan's energy policy, touching upon such topics as rate making and special rates, construction of new generation, electric choice, renewable energy, energy efficiency, wind energy resource zones, net metering, and new homeowner tax credits. The speaker will be Jennifer Utter Heston, a member of Energy, Utilities, and Telecommunications Department at Fraser Trebilcock Davis & Dunlap, P.C. Information/registration: Mark Zoeteman at mrzoeteman@ftch.com

2009 Energy Star Home Grants for Builders applications are now available at www.michigan.gov/energyoffice. Financial incentives are available to five builders constructing Energy Star rated homes. The houses must be built by August 30, 2009. It is expected that five grants will be awarded for \$5,000. A total of \$25,000 is available for the program.

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